

up. The priests and scribes (teachers of the people) had no lawful right to be of it. But, they dominated it. So far as the record discloses, there were but two "rulers of the Jews" in the body, to-wit: Joseph of Aramathea and Nicodemus. No record of the vote is given, but we may judge, from their subsequent kindness to Jesus, that these two not only did not vote to condemn, but doubtless were ready to accept him officially as Messiah, as they already had done as individuals. Is it far fetched to suppose that, if the court had been made up, as required by Jehovah, of elders elected by the people, the verdict would have been different? That instead of condemning, the court would have accepted Jesus as the Christ, he would have ascended his throne, and the Father, as in the case of Abraham and Isaac, taking the will for the deed, would have provided a substitute and saved him from the cruel death of the cross? Who knows? And the kingdom of heaven would now be two thousand years in advance of its present position.

This thing of an illegal court governing a church is a serious matter. Did you ever think of what engines of tyranny our church courts, as now constituted, would be if corruption, such as overcame the Church in the past, should again prevail? The dominating class being responsible only to themselves could ride rough-shod over the congregation, with no power to call them off.

And W. S. H. is "satisfied with the present form of government." And says: "It was given by the Great Head of the Church, by his chosen representatives." That is to say, that Jesus ascended and left his visible Church without a form of government. To say that is to question his wisdom. Or, it is to imply that he considered a form of government a matter of indifference, that could be left to other hands. Will W. S. H. kindly cite us the Scripture that tells of the formation of a government such as ours by his representatives? I have been studying the Acts diligently with my Bible class for several months and have failed to find it.

But did Jesus depart and leave his visible Church without a form of government? He left to local congregations the synagogue form of government which they had under the Old Testament dispensation, that is, a bench of ruling elders elected by the people. From the gospels, when read after the harmony, it is a reasonable deduction from them that the "other" seventy appointed by Jesus took the place of the seventy at Jerusalem. That court had rejected him as the Messiah, and he rejected it as the head of his visible Church, and appointed the "other seventy" in its place. In the gospels of John and Luke, following the Harmony, we read:

"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council and said: 'What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him alone all men will believe on him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them: 'Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.' . . . Then from that time forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus, therefore, walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence to a country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples." (John 11:47-54.)

"After these things the Lord appointed 'other seventy,' also, and sent them, two and two,

before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come." (Luke 10:1.)

That this seventy was appointed to supersede the Sanhedrin is evident from statements in the gospels and the Acts. We cite the following, for the present, in an article to follow this I will introduce more:

"And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying: Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace and answered nothing." (Mark 14:60-61.)

So, Jesus refused to make a defense before the Sanhedrin. Why? He was a law-abiding citizen of his nation, and if the court trying him had been a legal tribunal, it was his duty as a citizen to treat it with something more than silent contempt. No, as the Great Divine Head of the Church, he had rejected it and it was no longer with authority to try cases.

From the wonderful power given to the "other seventy," it is reasonable to infer that theirs was no mere temporary appointment for a short missionary tour. We have no record here of their names, but the Lord told them that their names were "written in heaven." The names of those heroes that "went before his face" to Antioch and organized our mother Church, and whither the Lord came after, by his Holy Spirit, are not known on earth, but I feel sure they were of the "other seventy" whose names were written in heaven.

W. S. H. raises the question of qualification of our teachers for ruling the Church. That is not under discussion. We are discussing principles and not men. If a man is made a ruler contrary to law that nullifies his qualifications for the office.

"During the first three centuries of our Christian era there was no outward, formal union of Christian congregations. During this period Christianity made great advances throughout the Roman Empire, and to some extent in the regions beyond."—Rev. E. C. Gordon, in *The Presbyterian of the South*.

If the facts are as Doctor Gordon states them, in the above extract from his letter, the quicker we revise our form of government the better. If relieved of the multiplicity of courts and man-made machinery with which it is encumbered the Presbyterian Church might be accelerated in its progress. The "other seventy" appointed by Jesus and their successors had the guidance—was the general government—of the Church during the period of which the Doctor writes. They left the local congregations the fullest liberty and hence "the great advance" of Christianity.

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CONSCIENCE.

By Rev. C. I. Stacy.

When Paul the prisoner said to the Council at Jerusalem, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day," he said what very few of us can say.

And when he said to Governor Felix, "Here in do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men," he gave us the divine program for a satisfactory life.

Now, what is conscience? Dr. Watson called it "The sense of right." Coleridge called it "The pulse of reason." Buchan's definition is "God's vicegerent in the soul," and Byron said that "Man's conscience is the Oracle of God."

It was evidently intended to be a safe guide to conduct, for Paul told the Romans that "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law,

these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."

When we follow this natural guide in its natural purity, we are at peace with ourselves. As Addison said, "A good conscience is to the soul what health is to the body."

But disobeyed, this inward monitor punishes relentlessly. Calvin described it thus: "The torture of a bad conscience is the hell of a living soul." Likewise Shakespeare:

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,

And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villian."

But conscience is human, and, like everything else human, is fallible. And being very sensitive, it can be trained. When Paul said that he "exercised himself" to have good conscience, he evidently meant that he had to keep his conscience in training, just as an athlete keeps his body in perfect condition, by constant exercise. Any warning, whether it is an alarm clock or a conscience, to continue to be useful, must be obeyed. To disregard it is to weaken the force of the next call, and if this is continued, it soon loses its power to awaken. And the next step is what Paul calls "having their conscience seared with a hot iron." It is then as useless as an unwound alarm clock.

But the Christian has a law other than that of his own conscience. It is the law of the other man's conscience. "All things are pure," indeed, to him who can see their purity, but the higher law is "Take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling block to them which are weak." "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." "Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other." And so the higher law of conscience for the Christian is "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Whence, then, shall we get the power to rise to a willing obedience to this higher law, and at the same time get the needed light and wisdom to train our own consciences aright? They both come from the same source, the Spirit of God. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

But have we received the Holy Spirit? Yes, for "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

The teaching of the word, then, would seem to be that if man lived a normal, simple life, he might safely trust his conscience as long as he treated it right. But since a properly trained conscience is very rare, and since its training is so very difficult in the complex civilization of today, and because the Christian's conscience needs to be more acute, more responsive than it is by nature, therefore we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to walk in the clearer light and larger life of the Christian way. And this Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of every believer, and is able, willing, and ready to "guide us into all truth," when we yield ourselves to his guidance. To depend on ourselves is to run great risk of going wrong; to yield to his guidance is to be assured of